

PREVENTION

IDAHO CHILDREN'S TRUST FUND NEWSLETTER

What is Child Abuse Prevention and Why is it Important?

The goal of child abuse prevention is simple – to stop child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place, sparing children and families emotional and physical trauma. A secondary goal is to decrease the need for costly intervention and treatment services. The best way to prevent child abuse and neglect is to support families and provide parents with the skills and resources they need to raise healthy children.

Why does child abuse occur?

Although all the causes of child abuse and neglect are not known, a significant body of research has identified several risk factors and protective factors (see sidebar) associated with child abuse. Studies have also shown that when there are multiple risk factors present, the risk of children being abused is greater.

For example, lack of knowledge of parenting skills, financial or other environmental stressors, difficulty in relationships, and depression or other mental health problems can all lead to abusive or neglectful behaviors. Parents may lack an understanding of the children's developmental stages and hold unreasonable expectations for their abilities. They also may be unaware of alternatives to corporal punishment or how to discipline their children most effectively at each age. Parents also may lack knowledge of the health, hygiene, and nutritional needs of their children.

These circumstances, combined with the inherent challenges of raising children, can result in otherwise well-intentioned parents causing their children harm or neglecting their needs.

How is child abuse prevented?

Prevention efforts build on family strengths. Through prevention activities such as parent education, home visitation, and parent support

groups, many families are able to find the support they need to stay together and care for their children in their homes and communities. Prevention efforts help parents develop their parenting skills, understand the benefits of nonviolent discipline techniques, and understand and meet their child's emotional, physical and developmental needs. Prevention programs also can help parents identify other needs they may have and offer assistance in getting that additional support. Prevention efforts work to create healthier environments for children and foster confident, positive parenting.

Why is prevention important?

A study conducted by the Michigan Children's Trust Fund illustrates the potential value of child abuse prevention programs. In 1992, the MCTF estimated that the cost of responding to child maltreatment in Michigan was \$823 million annually, including the estimated costs associated with low-weight births, child fatalities and preventable infant mortality, medical treatment, child protective services, foster care, juvenile and adult criminality, and psychological problems. In contrast, the cost of providing prevention services to all first-time parents in Michigan was estimated at \$43 million annually. The study concludes that while the incidence of abuse cannot be reduced to zero, investments in prevention can be cost effective if they result in even modest reductions in child abuse (Caldwell, 1992).

From the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information at
<http://nccanch.acf.hhs.gov/>



Child Abuse Risk Factors

The existence of these factors in a child's life does not mean the child will suffer from abuse, just that the potential for abuse or neglect is greater than if these factors did not exist in the child's life. (This is not an all-inclusive or exhaustive list).

- Child has a difficult or slow-to-warm-up temperament
- Child has a physical, cognitive or emotional disability
- Child has a chronic or serious illness,
- Child is aggressive, has behavior problems or attention deficits
- Parent had insecure attachment with own parents
- Parent was abused as a child
- Lack of parenting knowledge
- Parent has unrealistic expectations about child development
- Family is socially or geographically isolated or lacks support
- Parent has a mental illness or disorder
- Parent has substance abuse issues
- Domestic violence
- Teen parenthood
- Homelessness
- Dangerous or violent neighborhood
- Lack of access to:
 - medical care
 - health insurance
 - adequate child care
 - social services
 - emotional support

Protecting Idaho children from abuse and neglect.

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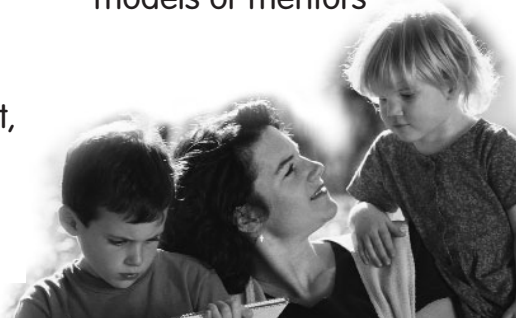
Russell Hammond

Department of Education
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Child Abuse Protective Factors

Just as there are factors that put a child at risk for abuse and neglect, there are factors that can help protect a child from abuse and neglect. *(This is not an all-inclusive or exhaustive list).*

- Good health
- History of adequate development
- Above-average intelligence
- Good peer relationships
- Easy-going temperament
- Good social skills
- Active coping style
- Positive self-esteem
- Parent was securely attached to own parent
- Supportive family environment
- Parent provides household structure and rules
- Extended family involvement, including caregiving help
- Family expectations of pro-social behavior
- Parent has a role model of competent parenting
- Parent has good coping skills
- Access to health care and social services
- Consistent parental employment
- Adequate housing
- Family participates in faith community
- Supportive adults (outside of family) serve as role models or mentors



Grant Applications Available January 2, 2004

Grant applications for the 2004 – 2005 grant cycle will be available on our website on January 2 in the following categories:

Mini Grants: Grants of up to \$8,000 are awarded to fund general child abuse and neglect prevention projects.

Target Grants: Grants of up to \$10,000 are awarded for child abuse and neglect prevention projects

that target traditionally underserved populations; specifically, Hispanic families, Native American families, or families with children or parents who have a disability.

Completed grant applications are due at the ICTF office on March 15, 2004; the 12 month grant cycle begins July 1, 2004 and ends June 30, 2005.



Save the Date!

The 5th annual

"Strengthening Families to Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect"

conference sponsored by the Idaho Children's Trust Fund is scheduled for
April 15 & 16, 2004 at the Holiday Inn in Boise.

We are pleased to announce that this year's nationally recognized keynote speakers will be Vincent Felitti, M.D. and Lundy Bancroft.

Workshop Topics:

Workshop topics this year will include:

- Understanding Children's Temperaments
- Protective Factors for Positive Parenting
- Dads 101 Curriculum
- Circle of Parents Support Groups
- ...and many more.

Registration:

Registration is only \$75 for both days and includes lunch and CEU's.



Dr. Felitti will share his research on the long-term health effects of traumatic childhood experiences, including child abuse, documented in the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) study first published in the May 1998 *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

Many common medical problems and dysfunctional behaviors in adults are the result of adverse emotional or physical experiences in childhood, according to the major medical study.

Lundy Bancroft is the author of *Why Does He Do That?: Inside the Minds Of Angry and Controlling Men*, and *The Batterer as Parent: Addressing the Impact of Domestic Violence on Family Dynamics*, the first book ever to look in detail at men who batter as they appear through the eyes of children in the home, and to explain how domestic violence affects mother-child and sibling relationships.

Information and details will be available on our website soon.

<http://idahochildrenstrustfund.state.id.us>



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